

March 8, 2021

To: The Honorable Senator Winfield, the Honorable Representative Stafstrom, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary

From: Stefan Wawzyniecki

Subject: **Senate Bill No. 1019:** An Act Concerning The Board Of Pardons And Paroles, Erasure Of Criminal Records For Certain Misdemeanor And Felony Offenses, Prohibiting Discrimination Based On Erased Criminal History Record Information And Concerning the Recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission with Respect to Misdemeanor Sentences

This written testimony, signed by the above named resident of Vernon, CT, is provided to show support of the proposed Senate Bill No. 1019, namely, the Clean Slate Bill. Please note that my demographic information includes being, white, and a suburban resident for over 40 years, and have no objection to this proposed legislation. I am a member of the parish of St Patrick/St Anthony church in Hartford, CT, and it is through our Pastor Father Mike Johnson, and church member Dwayne Paul that we were made aware of the plight of the incarcerated, after they have served their time. In the Bible, Jesus often spoke about forgiveness; he forgave those who sinned against others, forgave those who sinned against him, and asked the Church to continue his healing ministry. Jesus taught, "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you" (Matthew 6:14). Peter asked Jesus how often it is necessary to forgive, and Jesus replied, "Seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:22).

On a personal note, I was provided an opportunity a few years back to teach a course at the Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center in Uncasville, CT. A Federal program had provided Three Rivers Community College the funding to conduct full semester courses within the correctional facilities. Admittedly, I felt a bit nervous, especially, when I had to hand over to the guard my identification, and to have all my bags searched, as well as my cell phone and wristwatch. There were between 10-12 prisoners in the class, and they all were appreciative that they were given the opportunity to better their lives by attending the class. There were similarities between this class and others I had taught at the University of Connecticut- as an Instructor, one soon sees which students have more desire to learn, and which take up residence in the back row, not always being attentive. In other words, there were similarities between these two diverse student populations.

I was cautioned to not show too much personal interest in the personal lives of these inmates. A few did approach me, but their intentions were for how the course could better prepare them for life outside, when their sentence had been completed. These occasional displays gave me the personal satisfaction of knowing I was providing a service beneficial to them. The same benefit would be provided through the actions within the Clean Slate Bill. I hope that you give serious thought to making this piece of legislation a reality.